



# Waste Treatment Plant Draft Permit modification for Construction

## Tell Us What You Think!

Your careful thought and input is needed on a group of draft permit conditions for constructing a portion of Hanford's Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP). The plant is being built to vitrify (turn into a safer glass form) millions of gallons of highly radioactive waste currently stored in aging underground tanks. This draft modification incorporates construction details of the tank waste treatment facility into the Hanford Facility's Dangerous Waste permit.

Specifically, this modification includes **conditions for:**

- Pouring concrete in the Pretreatment Facility and the Low-Activity Waste Building
- Installation of tanks in the Pretreatment Facility and the Low-Activity Waste Building
- Installation of piping, valves and liners in the Low-Activity Waste Building

The draft permit modification also includes minor changes to clarify conditions and correct minor errors.

### Waste Treatment Plant Information

Under the Tri-Party Agreement that governs Hanford cleanup, the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) is required to build a waste treatment facility to treat waste remaining from years of nuclear production. The process outlined in the Tri-Party Agreement is vitrification, which treats the highly radioactive waste by breaking it down using high heat, separating the waste, and immobilizing the most dangerous elements by combining them with glass-forming materials. The treatment facility will have the capability to treat and immobilize both low-activity and high-level waste, producing containers of immobilized low-activity waste and immobilized high-level waste. The containers of low-activity glass will be disposed of at Hanford. The containers of high-level glass will be stored at Hanford temporarily, with final disposition planned for the National Repository. Building this type of dangerous/hazardous waste facility requires permits from the State of Washington.

### Waste Treatment Plant Permit Process

The Hanford Facility's Dangerous Waste permit encompasses both dangerous and mixed waste management requirements for the Hanford Site. Ecology issued this permit in August 1994 under provisions of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the Washington State Dangerous Waste Regulations. This permit is modified periodically to remove, modify and/or add permit conditions for treatment, storage, and disposal units currently in the permit, and to add new units, such as the Waste Treatment Plant.

Ecology plans to modify the WTP portion of the permit in phases as new design information becomes available, and as new or modified permit conditions are developed. This phased approach has already allowed construction to begin on one section of the treatment plant while design on future sections is being completed. As each phase of design work is completed, Ecology will review the design information for the next section of to be built, and once approved, modify the WTP portion of the permit to include the new design information. Ecology will ask for your input on each of these future permit modifications before they are finalized.

### What Does This Permit Cover?

This draft permit modification will allow USDOE and its contractor to pour concrete floors for the secondary containment system for tanks on the Pretreatment Facility ground floor; install three pre-treatment and collection tanks in the Pretreatment Facility basement; install a tanks, piping, valves and liners in the basement of the Low-Activity Waste Building; and pour concrete in both the Pretreatment Facility and Low-Activity Waste Building.

Previous permit modifications have included permit conditions for construction of the basement (floor and walls) of the facility's Pretreatment Building, Low-Activity Waste Building, and High Level Waste Building.

Future permit modifications will incorporate new or modified design information, and new or modified permit conditions (as necessary) for installing equipment such as processing tanks, piping, leak detection instruments, and construction of subsequent levels of each building. Ecology will ensure that each phase of the construction meets state requirements before issuing each subsequent phase of the permit.

This permit modification does not cover future operations of the Waste Treatment Plant. Once construction is complete, Ecology will conduct inspections and prepare a draft permit modifications detailing operational permit conditions, and will ask for your input before approving the final operations permit.

### How can you get involved?

A 45-day public-comment period runs from June 2 – July 18, 2003. No public hearing is planned at this time; however, Ecology will consider requests for a hearing. All comments received during the public-comment period will be considered and responded to before Ecology issues the final permit decision on whether to approve modification of this portion of the permit.

The permittee is the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE), Office of River Protection (Owner/Operator), 2440 Stevens Center Place, Richland, Washington, 99352; and Bechtel National Incorporated, (Co-Operator), 2535 Stevens Center Plan, Richland, Washington, 99352.

Copies of the permit are available for review at the Hanford Public Information Repositories listed below. The documents are also available on Ecology's Web site: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/nwp/index.html>

Send written comments to:

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[ssku461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:ssku461@ecy.wa.gov)

**For additional information, call the Hanford Cleanup line at 800-321-2008.**

If you have special accommodation needs, or require this document in alternative format, please contact Mary Anne Wuennecke, Department of Ecology, Nuclear Waste Program, at (509) 736-3036 (voice) or 711 or 1-800-833-6388 (TTY).

## HANFORD PUBLIC INFORMATION REPOSTIORES

### **Portland**

Portland State University  
Branford Price Millar Library  
934 SW Harrison and Park  
Portland, OR 97207  
(503) 725-3690  
Attn: Michael Bowman/Jocelyn Kramer  
E-mail: [bowman@lib.pdx.edu](mailto:bowman@lib.pdx.edu)

### **Spokane**

Gonzaga University  
Foley Center  
East 502 Boone  
Spokane, WA 99258  
(509) 323-3839  
Attn: Connie Scarppelli  
E-mail: [carter@its.gonzaga.edu](mailto:carter@its.gonzaga.edu)

### **Richland**

Public Reading Room  
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Consolidated Information Center, Rm. 101L  
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(509) 372-7443  
Attention: Terri Traub  
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### **Seattle**

University of Washington Suzzallo Library  
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